

Paraga, a civilian, and three of his colleagues in the leadership of what was then known as the Croatian Party of Rights.

The case put seriously in question the claim of the Republic of Croatia to stand as a nation constituted under the rule of law. The prosecution posed grave threats to universal principles of human rights, particularly these fundamental freedoms and basic elements of the due process of law: Freedoms of speech, association, and assembly; Independence of the judiciary; Supremacy of civilian authority over the military; Prohibition against double jeopardy (that is, freedom from being put to trial more than once for the same offense).

I was especially troubled by highly irregular procedural characteristics of this prosecution of Mr. Paraga. The dismissal of the chief judge of Croatia's highest court in the immediate aftermath of that court's previous decision favorable to Mr. Paraga was, and remains, profoundly suspect. The chief prosecutor in the military prosecution was simultaneously a national party leader, an active officer in the Croatian military, a military prosecutor, and a special public defender. The prosecution was surrounded by invidious references to the ethnic and religious backgrounds of Mr. Paraga and his family.

Mr. Paraga, a Roman Catholic, is the grandson of a Jew. He has been disparaged in the government-controlled media of Croatia both as a Jew and as an antisemite. He has been characterized as both a former communist and as a secret fascist. I have met with and interviewed Mr. Paraga and have studied his platform, speeches, and writings. I have interviewed others, both Croatian and American, who know him well. I am satisfied that Mr. Paraga is genuinely committed to principles of human rights, individual liberty, the rule of law, free-market economics, and limited, constitutional government.

Since the successful conclusion of the military trial, the Croatian Government has continued to harass Mr. Paraga and his party and has repeatedly attempted to silence them. Twice, by administrative fiat, the regime has removed Mr. Paraga from the leadership of his party, installed other leaders with loyalty to the regime, deprived his party of its assets, and denied effective judicial review of these actions. Although Croatia has since acceded to European conventions on human rights, these actions occurred at a time when European human rights agencies and tribunals did not have jurisdiction to inquire into, or redress, them. It remains to be seen whether or not the Croatian Government will continue its efforts to suppress legitimate political activity by Mr. Paraga and others and, if so, whether or not Europe's human rights institutions prove effective in safeguarding political liberty in Croatia. Meanwhile, Mr. Paraga has established a new political party, known as the "Croatian Party of Rights—1861", taking the name, and recalling the year of foundation, of Croatia's oldest domestic political party. Furthermore, there is a disturbing trend over the past few years by the Croatian government to use administrative courts to replace heads of democratically elected parties. The method is simple, the party is registered as being headed by someone who is favored by the ruling party. The government should return democratically elected leaders of Parliamentary parties who were removed by administrative measures.

Americans look forward to welcoming Croatia with open arms as a full-fledged member of the democratic family of nations. To claim that birthright, however, Croatia must demonstrate that it has established a government of laws and not of men. Americans of all parties, ethnic backgrounds, and religious traditions will continue to monitor political and human rights developments in Croatia. We hope that, in due course, the people of Croatia will be blessed with a meaningful legal and constitutional system.

¹ Joseph A. Morris is a member of the Chicago law firm of Morris, Rathnau & De La Rosa. From 1981 through 1988 he served in senior legal positions in the administration of President Ronald Reagan, including as Chief of Staff and General Counsel of the United States Information Agency, as Director (with the rank of Assistant Attorney General of the United States) of the Office of Liaison Services of the Department of Justice, and as a United States delegate to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights at Geneva. He also served from 1981 through 1996, during the administrations of Presidents Reagan, Bush, and Clinton, on the Administrative Conference of the United States. He was the founder and first Chairman of the Center for Public Policy of B'nai B'rith International, the world's oldest and largest Jewish organization, and is currently the President of the Midwest Region of B'nai B'rith in the United States.

FANNIE MAE'S FOUR YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF ITS TRILLION DOLLAR COMMITMENT TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

HON. RICK LAZIO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 18, 1998

Mr. LAZIO of New York. Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Housing and Community Opportunity Subcommittee, I congratulate Fannie Mae on the four-year anniversary of its Trillion Dollar Commitment to improving our nation's housing. In 1994, Fannie Mae Chairman and CEO Jim Johnson announced that by the end of the year 2000 the company would provide a trillion dollars in targeted housing finance to serve families with incomes below the median, minorities and new immigrants, families who live in central cities, rural areas and distressed communities and people with special housing needs. This effort is intended to help 10 million additional families attain the American dream of homeownership.

In order to achieve this goal, Fannie Mae is creating new products, breaking down financial and informational barriers to homeownership, reaching out to new partners and making the elimination of discrimination the number one priority of the housing finance industry. Fannie Mae has opened 29 partnership offices to assist with these efforts. Lenders, realtors, homebuilders, mortgage insurers, non-profits and others in the housing industry have joined Fannie Mae in this successful effort which already has helped 5.6 million families achieve the dream of homeownership and which has provided \$440 billion in housing finance.

Recently, Fannie Mae announced two new programs that are having a positive impact on the affordable housing needs in my district. Fannie Mae's initiatives not only encourage homeownership but also promote revitalization of cities through loans that provide for renovation of homes in high-cost urban areas. These programs, Homestyle Remodeler and Flexible 97, allow homeowners and homebuyers to borrow money for renovation and rehabilitation of their homes. Homestyle Remodeler is being tested exclusively on Long Island, and Flexible 97 is being tested around the country, including on Long Island.

Again, congratulations to Fannie Mae and its partners on a successful four years and I wish them even greater success in the years ahead. This initiative is making a major impact on communities across the nation as the following letters from Mayors indicate.

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR,

Kansas City, MO., March 2, 1998.

James A. Johnson,
Chairman and CEO, Fannie Mae,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Please allow me to congratulate and commend you and Fannie

Mae on the leadership you have provided to make homeownership and affordable housing available to Kansas City families as part of the Trillion Dollar Commitment.

The \$650 million Kansas City Investment Plan and the opening of the Partnership Office has provided for significant additional opportunities in the furtherance of affordable housing. These efforts have been multifaceted and done in partnership as you have worked with city and state governments, non-profits, lenders, developers and other housing advocates to achieve this goal.

Through it, you have provided for the \$12.8 million rehabilitation of the 455 unit Royal Woods Apartments, formerly known as Hanover in the Woods and the current \$5.7 million rehabilitation of the 450 unit President's Gardens.

Your \$400,000 community development financial investment into Douglass National Bank, a minority owned lender, characterizes your strong commitment to housing and lending opportunities to minority families as does the 8.7% increase in minority homebuyers assisted under your investment plan.

We are especially pleased by the many single family mortgage products that have been developed for the Kansas City market including our partnership around the Police in Neighborhoods project. Creating homeownership assistance opportunities to foster the purchase of homes in our community by the members of the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department is something that I am most proud. A member of my security detail, Marlon Buie, and his family purchased such a home and they are featured in your new One Trillion Dollar Commitment Report publication.

The development of the Kansas City Homeownership Counseling Collaborative, to allow for the expansion of homeownership education for Kansas City families is another example of your work in this city.

These are only some of the activities engaged by Fannie Mae in Kansas City but they provide clear evidence of the undeniable, positive impact that Fannie Mae is having here and around the country on housing finance.

We value the relationship we have with Fannie Mae and wish to congratulate you on the success achieved under the Trillion Dollar Commitment and we look forward to continuation of this partnership.

Sincerely,

Emanuel Cleaver II.

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR,

Hartford, CT, March 4, 1998.

JAMES A. JOHNSON,
Chairman, Fannie Mae,
Washington, DC.

DEAR JIM: I'm writing to congratulate you and Fannie Mae on the work you've done and on the celebration of the fourth anniversary of your Trillion Dollar Commitment. I would like to commend Fannie Mae on its leadership and diligent pursuit of meeting the goals you set forth to make homeownership and affordable housing available to so many more families.

I would further commend you on your efforts here in Hartford. My administration has worked in concert with your Hartford Partnership Office since you opened the office in early 1995. Hartford is on the rebound and homeownership and rebuilding neighborhoods has been a critical ingredient. The HouseHartford program which we created jointly has helped over 110 families become homeowners in our City during the past year and one-half. The program is broadly seen as a huge success evidenced by the increase in dollars the City has committed to providing downpayment assistance. Perhaps more importantly, we have seen a marked rise in the number of minority households achieving homeownership status which should make a dramatic impact in the health of our neighborhood over time. I understand that Fannie Mae has been instrumental in building the reach and capacity of the homeownership

counseling and educational group as evidenced by the formation of the Counseling Collaborative.

The Partnership Office has helped or is helping on a number of other fronts as well. In May 1997, with the help of the Partnership Office, we passed a City Ordinance which prioritizes homeownership efforts. This ordinance was passed unanimously and had the strong backing of City department heads, the private sector and neighborhood leaders. We now are working with Fannie Mae on a much more challenging initiative; helping owner-occupiers in the City who face "negative equity" mortgage situations get access to more affordable mortgage rates. I pledge to do everything in my power to work with Fannie Mae to create a solution to this important issue facing a significant number of Hartford homeowners.

The City of Hartford values the relationship we have with Fannie Mae. I wish to congratulate you on the success you have earned so far. We look forward to a continued close partnership as Hartford moves forward with its revitalization agenda and its goal to increasing the homeownership rate in our city.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL P. PETERS,
Mayor.

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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR,
Houston, TX, March 3, 1998.

Mr. JAMES A. JOHNSON,
Chairman, Fannie Mae,
Washington, DC.

DEAR JIM: On behalf of the City of Houston, I would like to congratulate Fannie Mae on this fourth anniversary of your Trillion Dollar Commitment to assist ten million families attain decent and affordable housing by the year 2000, and to transform the mortgage finance industry to better address barriers to homeownership. With this initiative, Fannie Mae is demonstrating the leadership and foresight needed to meet the challenges of homeownership for all families of our great country.

I am the newly elected mayor of Houston, but I have been apprised of your HouseHouston investment strategy and the

good work Fannie Mae has done in our city. If other areas of the country are experiencing Fannie Mae's presence as we are, then exceptional progress is being made toward the goals of your Commitment. I am particularly pleased with your Partnership Office under the direction of J.J. Smith. The office is doing a terrific job of building partnerships and making more of our neighborhoods and housing professionals aware of resources available to meet their affordable housing objectives.

Our City is very ethnically diverse. Thus, lending to the minority families, developers and builders is extremely important to our well being. With investments from Fannie Mae, mortgages for minority first-time home buyers is up and four minority neighborhoods have seen the first significantly newly constructed multifamily apartment projects in over 30 years. A new subdivision will be developed in a minority neighborhood with an equity investment from Fannie Mae. More than twenty community-based and counseling organizations have greater capacity to serve homebuyers as a result of your counseling software and training. And neighborhood revitalization is progressing with the assistance of a \$10 million Fannie Mae line of credit.

We are pleased with our partnership with Fannie Mae and look forward to even greater accomplishments with you over the next few years. Again, congratulations for your successes under HouseHouston and the Trillion Dollar Commitment.

Sincerely,

LEE P. BROWN,
Mayor.

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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR,
Miami, FL, March 6, 1998.

Mr. JAMES A. JOHNSON,
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Fannie Mae, Washington, DC.

DEAR JIM: I wish to congratulate Fannie Mae on its leadership as you celebrate the fourth anniversary of the bold and far reaching "Trillion Dollar Commitment" to affordable housing initiative. The "Trillion Dollar Commitment" represents yet another outstanding Fannie Mae accomplishment in

making home ownership and affordable housing more accessible.

Since July, 1995, Miami-Dade County has seen the opening of a Partnership Office that has energized our housing, community, enlightened the dialogue in our community about affordable housing and offered a variety of solutions to address our needs. The local Partnership Office, under the exemplary leadership of Shalley Jones, has become a key partner in our housing industry and in any affordable housing project. It has focused on all aspects of lending with a strong focus on engaging minority and low-income populations in the discussion. We value the relationship we have with Fannie Mae and the major role the local Partnership Office plays in our community.

During its second year of existence, the local Partnership Office assisted more than 18,000 families, of which more than 81% were minority borrowers, in obtaining affordable housing through the Fannie Mae Community Home Buyers Program. Two community development financial institutions can do more community lending because of the \$200,000.00 in deposits made by Fannie Mae. There have been four underwriting experiments that have addressed the critical financing needs of first time home buyers, new immigrants and rehab housing in this community. Our counseling agencies are better able to aid new home buyers because of the 45 new software packages provided to non-profits, training sessions held and housing collaboratives established. I joined the Partnership Office in hosting two housing fairs that provided over 13,000 residents with information on how to buy a home. Clearly, the Fannie Mae Partnership Office in Miami-Dade County has had an extremely positive impact on housing finance in our county.

We wish to congratulate you on the success you have achieved thus far under the Trillion Dollar Commitment. We look forward to the next several years of continued partnership and expansion of markets and home buying opportunities for all of our citizens.

Sincerely,

ALEX PENELAS, Mayor.